

[Mr. Louis Bartula]

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[Life History?]

FOLKLORE—WHITE PIONEER,

Miss Effie Cowan, P.W.

McLennan County, Texas,

District 8.

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REFERENCE.

Interview with Mr Louis Bartula, Bremond,Texas.

“The first Polish settler in the Bremond community was my ancestor, Joseph Bartula who was in the habit of putting down in writing all the events of historical interest , which . He he kept this up until the loss of his right he lost his right hand. hand. The following are a few of his notations;

“As a cart-wright I left my home town , Pilzenski, Galacia, in 1873, and together with my wife and five children , we landed at Galveston and proceeded to New Waverly, where we lived for a time , and two years later we came to the community of Bremond, wher where/ we have lived since. In the course of this time we lost three sons and all the possessions

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we had. "In Bremond Besides the my family , of myself there was the family of F. Bojanski, in Bremond. The town was larger at that time. Soon after us , came Pletrzykoski with three daughters and a son, wife and two children. They were followed by the families of Martin Matysiak, Michael Pasket, Floryan Bachinowski, Frank Knot and Joseph Bojerowski, A Mr Matysiak was the first of these settlers to buy land. He bought fifty acres for which he paid \$500.00 The first Polish child born in Bremond was my son Joseph. Four times a year we enjoyed the coming of Father Biusant, a Frenchman, who held services for us at the Roberts home. " In 1877, Father Mosiewicz was appointed the pastor at Marlin, Texas, where there were some sixty Polish families living. Father Mosiewicz visited us once a month and held services in our homes. Two years later when our colony began to make rapid gains in population we built our own church. C12 2/11/41 - Texas 2 " By that time we had fifty families, namely: Fr. Bojanski, Fl. Bojanski, J. Bulmanski, A. Baranski, J. Bojerewski, F. Bielanowicz. J. Balczerk, J. Cierlewski, J. Chp ewiak [Chplewiak?] , M. Cwikul, J. Drajus, J. Dogut, A. Grabowski, F. Golosinski, S. [Kno1/2ik?], A. Kazmierowski, A. Kreinski, F. A. Konofy, M. Matysiak, A. Miller, J. Ochydalski, M. Pieniazek, W. Piertrykowski, M. Paszyiet, K. Rybacki, F. Ruminski, B. Schepert, M. Szulo, A. Standera, J. Stachowiak, A. Strugala, J. Suchowiak, M. Surma, W. Urbanski, W. Zucholski, J. Zapapacz, J. Sadowski, F. Kempinski, A. Adamik, W. Wisniewski, M. Szturemski, J. Kazmierowski and L. Starzewski. " Large as our congregation was we were only able to collect \$115.00. It / is doubtful if the building which cost us \$1200.00 would have ever been built had it not been [ofor?] the assistance of our American friends. J. S. Roberts gave \$250.00 and other large sums came from over the county. The first services in the new church were held by Father Mosiewicz on P tecost Pentecost Sunday. Soon after this Father Polulanski came to help us. In During this time , the Parish became divided. Then Father Mosiewicz resigned, and this state of affairs existed until the arrival of Father Litwora. " From the beginning we were so poor that we gave the pastor but little of the produce which we r ised raised in the fields. Father Mosiewicz planted a few acres and the parish children helped him, - heavy were the times. But bette better times followed. "Today", wrote S. Nesterowicz in 1901 , " there are three-hundred and twenty-five families

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in the parish and the people have been repaid a hundred fold for their failures in the beginning". 3 " The Catholic Church in Bremond, Bremonds Catholic Church, Parish of St Mary's, Galveston Diocese, was established in 1876. As has been told in the beginning it was attended by Father Mosiewicz of Marlin. For some time Father Casimer Polulanski was stationed at Bremond. He was resident pastor of Parish of St Mary's Church, and in 1888, Father Peter Litwora became pastor. He was [?] ordained in Poland, and had his trip from Europe and expenses connected with it , paid by the colonist of Bremond. His brother , Felix , was organist. In January 1904 Father Litwora was moved to Anderson Texas, but continued to help at Bremond.

"Following him - four years later , Father Francis Mohan, an [ex-?] Franciscan Czech served until June 1904; Then came the assistant from Bryan, Father Anthony Kripajtis, a Lutheran, who remained in service until his death inn November, 1907; New Years eve, 1908, the present pastor, Father I. J. Szymanski was appointed. During his continued years of service, the church has wroug wrought out a far-reaching and consecrated destiny.

"Father Szymanski came to America when a boy from Poznan, Poland. He studied in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, in the Detriot Seminary, and in the Seminary of Cincinnati , Ohio. His ordination took place in leveland Cleveland and his first appointment as pastor was in Brenham, where he remained five and a half years before coming to Bremond. Through his inspiration an and labor the present Parish of St Mary's Church of Bremond was built, in his first year as pastor. It is a spacious and beautiful brick building, one hundred and twenty-five feet long and [?] fifty - two feet wide, a credit to his ability and a token of esteem in which he is held by his parishioners. Much of the labor and a great deal of the material was donated by the people. The old church was converted into a parochial school with an attendance of forty children when it opened. 4 "The year 1936 marked another forward era of leadership under Father Szymanski. the present beautiful, new pariochoil parochial school building came into existence. The community had outgrown its earlier facilities and parishioners pledged the necessary finances. Enrollment exceeds 260

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students. Father Szymanski celebrated his sacerdotal jubilee in 1927 for which occasion the Most [?] Reverend Bishop Byrne and numerous clergy were present. Five years later (1932) the pastor commemorated the silver jubilee of his pastorate in the parish , another solemn occasion [?] of much rejoicing.

“In July, 1935, Most Reverend Joseph Gavlina, Bishop of Poland's army, who visited all the Polish colonies in the state, presented Father Szymanski with a Golden Medal of Merit from the Polish nation. Father Szymanski and Father St. Przyborowski of Cestochowa were the only two in Texas to receive this recognition. St Mary's parish of Bremond has the unusual honor of having seventeen daughters of the religious life. Seven girls entered the St. Josephs Convent of Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Two are members of the Incarnate Word of Shiner , and eight are Sisters of the Felician Order of Chicago. Considering the large number in the parish, it is a source of wonderment that there are few, if any, mixed marriages mong among these people.

“As in the Polish parishes of San Antonio , Diocese, many of the younger families, as the population became too thick for the limited territory, have moved to the larger cities. Many from Bremond found homes in Houston, Ft. Worth, Beaumont, and Waco, Texas. Besides the societies of exclusively religious nature, there are in the parish the Polish National Union, under the patronage of St. Joseph and the Catholic Union, both enjoying large memberships. 5 Besides the customs and practices peculiar to the Poles in the San Antonio Diocese, the parishioners still observe the “Oplatki” (wafers). This is just before Christmas, usually the organist distributes wafers resembling those used for Holy Mass, and at this distribution each parishioner gives a small offering to the organist or altar boys who bring the wafers. These are sent to relatives and friends in Europe and the latter do not forget those in America. On Christmas eve the family gathers to partake of the wafer first of all , in token of continued love, mended friendship and good will to men.

“And now a word of the American school system as it stands today - under the guidance of S. Z. Hall superintendent; B.S., LLB., M.A. Mrs W. T. Whaley B.A. principal; Miss

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Katherine Goodwin, B.A. Adron Ming, B.A. Elizabeth Averyt, B.A. Mrs Seth Brantner, B.A. Miss Mildred Hearne, Miss Mattie Bennett, Sam Hardy, coach, and Miss Aline Collier, West End school instructor.

“The colored faculty contains Charlie Love, Principal. Mary Edwards, Oddie Shaw, Norris Betts, and Charles Giddings. John Baker serves as janitor of the system , and five citizens of the district or neighboring districts own and operate busses for transportation of pupils inside the district, and from neighboring districts into the Bremond High School, namely Stanley Stachowiak, [?] ruitt Eddie Pruitt , Mr Heggie, Edwin Bienski and Cleo Bielomowicz. The board of trustees are L. V. Holbert, chairman; B. D. Troyanowski secretary, George Abraham, George Holland, Miss Lottie May Walker, Louis Bartula and John Klotz. The school system is in excellent condition and has a financial budget of around \$21.000, and an increasing enrollment. 6 “Thus from a little log school house in the sixties and a board one in the 70's the school's of Bremond has advanced to the present Independent School District which comprises the old Bremond school District and the former [?] Wooton Wells Common School District, an area of 35 [?] square miles. There are at present six public school buildings and one St Mary's Parochial School within the boundaries of the Bremond District. The rolls [?] 731 for 1938 -1939, with 75 transfers from eleven neighboring districts. This gives a total of 826 scholastics for which the State will pay apportionment for 1938-39.

“Bremond was recently incorporsted since August 22, 1938, and the people voted to match the \$90.000 W.P.A. fund with which to build a city water works and sewer system. Joe Rumble, son of the early pioneer settler was elected mayor and the alderman were George Abrahams Abraham's , B. A. Trayanowski, H. C. Walker, F. J. McCall and Ray Hearn Jr. : S.C Hall being City secretary and also superintendent of the Bremond Public schools. Bill Pack, a new comer, is city marshall and deputy sheriff of Robertson County.

“As before mentioned remond Bremond is known for its rail / terminus, its population of Anglo- American and Polish American families, its red sandy soil of the Brazos and Little

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Brazos, its Parish of St Mary's Catholic Church, and parochial school, Galveston Diocese and its huge congregation, mostly Polish; its fine public school system and its friendly co-operative [?] - spirit of its people.